

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT
BISHOP'S-STORTFORD
IN
HERTFORDSHIRE,

Wm AUG. 25. 1713. *Saunders*
AT THE

ANNIVERSARY SOLEMNITY
OF THE
SCHOOL-FEAST.

By GEO. OLDHAM, B.D. Vicar of St. Paul's
WALDEN, and Fellow of St. John's College
in CAMBRIDGE.

C A M B R I D G E: *A*

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THE
F. B. M. O.
STONFORD

HERTFORDSHIRE
AT THE



UNIVERSITY OF
SCHOOL OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF
COLLEGE

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To the HONOURABLE
CHARLES MAYNARD, *Esq.*

AND

WILLIAM ALLEN, *Esq.*

STEWARDS

OF THE

SCHOOL-FEAST,

And to the Rest of the GENTRY
and CLERGY there present,

THIS

SERMON

IS HUMBL Y

DEDICATED.

To the Honorable

CHARLES MAYNARD, Esq.

AND

WILLIAM ALLEN, Esq.

STEWARDS

OF THE

SCHOOL-FEAST.

And to the Hosts of the Gentry
and Gentry their friends

THIS

SERMON

IS HUMBL Y

DEDICATED.

I COR. I. 10.

Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.

AMONG the various Objections, that have been raised against the Christian Religion, there seems to be scarce any one more Common, and yet to carry less Force and Reason with it, than that which is grounded on a Surmise, of it's being the mischievous Cause of so much unhappy Dispute in the World. It must indeed be owned, that too many Controversies have been started about Religion, and those, very often, unfortunately carried beyond the Bounds of Temper and Sobriety. But what then? can there be no Certainty, where there is a Controversy, or no good Use to be made of any thing, but where all are at once unanimously agreed? By this Way of arguing the Learned Professions of *Law* and *Physick* might be also set aside as useless; because Men of those *Faculties* do as often differ about particular Cases, tho' at the same time all Mankind agree, that both are not only of great Advantage, but also really necessary.

HOWEVER Religion may afford an Handle for such Disputes and Controversies, yet without Question,
A Truth

Truth is somewhere to be found, tho' it be controverted. And surely it cannot be a blameable Undertaking, to make a strict Enquiry after Truth, to separate it from Error, and to set it in a fair Light, which it always deserves, and will always bear. And had the generality of Men that seek for Truth, more Piety and Learning, and less Passion and Prejudice, all Disputes about Religion would soon be brought within a narrow Compass. And tho' we may rather silently wish, than reasonably hope for such blessed Days; yet in the mean time it is but just, that those visible and immediate *Occasions* of Dissension and Dispute should have all that Blame laid upon them, which some maliciously endeavour to throw upon Religion. For Christianity of it self is a remarkably Meek and peaceable Institution, and prescribes the best Method for allaying the Passions, and Sweetning the *Dispositions* of Men.

It's Doctrines, if *attended to*, are a Sovereign Antidote against Pride, and *sufficiency*; and evidently tend to correct all Sourness of Spirit, and Perverseness of Humour. And as if these were not weighty and cogent enough in themselves, tho' they carry such apparent Reason with them, the severest Penalties are also affixed to deter Men from acting in Opposition to them. A Man therefore must have very little or no Regard, either to the Reasonableness of the *Injunctions* themselves, or indeed to his own safety, that will refuse to yield a ready Compliance to them.

BUT yet, if we cast an Eye to the Records of former Ages, or consult our own Experience, we may meet with too many deplorable Instances to the contrary. The *Apostles* themselves complained of some notorious Breaches of Christian Peace and Unity even in their own Days. (An Argument at least, that no pretended Papal Infallibility can now secure such

Unity

Unity, when a Real and Apostolical Infallibility was not *absolutely effectual* to so good an End.) However, least their Silence in the Matter should be Interpreted an Approbation of such Proceedings, they took Care all along to Inform their Converts of the true Nature of, and the strong Obligations they lay under to Christian Unity: thereby as well representing the Necessity of *that Duty*, as reproving the Breach of it.

THE *Corinthians*, to whom St. Paul wrote this Epistle, not long after their Embracing the Christian Faith, through Fickleness of Humour, and partial Respect of Persons, had fallen into some bitter and unchristian Dissensions. Which the *Apostle*, fully satisfied no doubt, how mightily these defaced the Beauty of Religion, and defeated the Efficacy of it, was no sooner acquainted with; but he immediately sets himself to cure those growing Evils. To which purpose in the precedent Verses, he first declares his Commission and Authority; and after a short Salutation, and returning thanks to God, for the Grace, which was *already* given them, He proceeds in the Words of my Text, to Exhort them to Christian Love and Unity. *I beseech you*, says he, *Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.*

SEE with what a Spirit of Meekness he addresses himself to those, who by reason of their intemperate Heats, and shameful Divisions, had really deserved another sort of Treatment. He seems willing to hope, that the Disease they labour'd under, was not so far gone, but that it might admit of a speedy and sufficient Remedy: and that when They came to consider

coolly of the Matter, *that*, which He proposed, might have so happy an Influence upon them, as to work a thorough Cure. He therefore salutes them by the Name of Brethren, tho' their *late* Practices had render'd them not undeserving of *another* Title and Character. He condescends so far, as to admonish them, at the same time that He might have laid his Command upon them, by Virtue of his *Apostolical* Authority, thereby shewing, how great an Affection He had for them, when He even intreated them, for their own Advantage, to close with the good Advice that He gave them. He beseeches them, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ: that is, for *his Sake*, and for *his Honour*, that they would come to a better Temper, and a better Practice. That if they had any sincere Love for their Saviour, the *Prince of Peace*, they would shew it in a Deportment, suitable to his glorious Example and expresse Command: if any Regard to his *Honour*, they would Vindicate it from the unjust Reproaches *it* did already, and was likely hereafter to undergo, especially amongst *the Unbelievers*, on the Account of their unreasonable Dissensions.

AND oh! How happy would it be for us, had we not the same, or rather a greater Occasion, often to repeat and inculcate this most excellent Advice of *the Apostle*. But, to the Shame and Scandal of abundance of the Modern Professors of Christianity be it spoken, they seem far to have outgone many of the Antients, as well in declining from the great Rules of Christian Unity, as in obstinately defending such a rash and imprudent Conduct. And therefore in order at once to rectify such fatal Mistakes, and to do Justice to the Occasion of this Solemn Meeting. I propose,

First, To lay before You some of the Chief Instances, wherein all Christians are indispensably obliged to Unity.

Secondly

Secondly, Beg leave, on this Occasion, more particularly to represent to You, the Usefulness of a Religious and Learned Education, in Order to preserve and promote such truly Christian Unity.

Thirdly and lastly. Make a brief Application of these Particulars.

First, Then I am to lay before You some of the Chief Instances, wherein all Christians are indispensably obliged to Unity.

And what can I pitch upon better than those, which the Apostle himself alludes to in the Passage before Us? I observe then, that all Christians are under the strongest Obligations, as *the first and greatest* Instance of Christian Unity, to embrace and adhere to all the necessary Doctrines, and fundamental Articles of our most holy Religion. And this is what I take to be principally meant by the Charge here given to the *Corinthians*, that *they all speak the same thing*. As there is but *One Lord*, so likewise is there but *One Faith*. To the former of which is due all Worship and Honour; to the latter, an humble Reception, and a steady Adherence. And hence we find *St. Paul*, very frequently laying his strict Injunctions upon those he wrote to, to keep *the Faith*: and particularly admonishing his Son *Timothy*, to hold fast the form of sound Words. And to the same purpose *St. Jude* exhorts all Christians, *earnestly to contend for the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints*. Which *Faith* is now most fully contain'd in the Writings of the Old, and New Testament. It was therefore wisely observed by the Learned *Grotius*: *Quod varia sunt Philosophorum placita, Christianorum una regula fidei*. For those sacred Writings contain a compleat and perfect Rule of Faith, exclusive

five of all *Oral* and unwritten *Traditions*, or of the Books, which go under the false Title of *Apostolical Constitutions*. To *those* then solely are we to have a devout Regard: and as on the one Hand, we ought not to admit any Articles of Faith, but what have a just Foundation there, so on the other we ought not to reject any that really have. As to all the *absolutely* necessary Articles of Faith, that have been *constantly*, and *universally* believ'd by the Catholick Church, and which none ever opposed, but he was presently disowned as a *sound* Member of it, they are comprised in a small Compass; and are plain and obvious, notwithstanding some late *perverse* Comments, that seem to be devised for this bad purpose; namely, to perplex, or rather to interpret away the Articles themselves. These are briefly summ'd up in that, which goes under the Name of the Apostle's Creed; which as they may be proved by most certain Warrants of Scripture, so upon that Account alone, they justly claim our most firm belief and hearty Assent. In all the Essentials therefore of Faith, and *necessary* Doctrine, we should *all speak the same thing*; and Unanimously endeavour to keep the Faith pure and undefiled. It behoves Us, equally to shun all such pretended Articles of Faith, which are grounded only on Unwritten, and Uncertain Tradition, and all such New-fangled Notions, which tend to undermine the very Fundamentals of Christianity. The former, as having no sufficient Authority: The latter, as precarious and unreasonable. For as a most Learned Prelate (Bishop PEARSON) well observes, '*In Christianity there can be no concerning Truth, which is not Antient; and whatsoever is truly New, is certainly False.*' It is readily agreed to, that all Doctrinal Points are not of equal Moment in Religion; but most certain

certain it is, that some are absolutely necessary, and therefore of the greatest Importance and Concern. And *these* are most properly stiled Fundamental Articles; inasmuch as the belief or disbelief of *these* evidently affects the ground and basis of Christianity itself. And accordingly the resolute Denial of, and Opposition to, such fundamental Doctrines of Faith, necessarily involve Men in the guilt of Heresy. And what an heavy Doom shall await those who are infected with, and continue in it, the Apostle St. Paul fully informs us, and declares, that such *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*. How reasonable and necessary then must Unity in Fundamentals be, when such fatal Consequences attend a wilful and perverse Disagreement in them? How strict and indispensable, must the Obligations be to it, when we cannot break through them, but at the Peril and Expence of our Eternal Safety?

2dly, Another Instance wherein all Christians are indispensably obliged to Unity, is in External Communion in the Prayers and Sacraments, as Members of the Catholick Church of Christ, in some rightly established Part of it; to which purpose the Advice of St. Paul is very apposite, *I beseech you, that there be no Divisions, or Schisms, among you*. Would not any considerate Man be apt to think, that those who owned the same God and Saviour, and professed Obedience to the same Commands, should stand in need of little intreaty to engage them in the same joint Worship and Adoration of him: Would he not reasonably conclude, that such should strive *with one Mind, and one Mouth* to glorify God, constantly attend the Publick Service of his Church, and duely observe his positive Institutions? But however ready
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any Person, who enquires into the Reasons of Things, might be, to draw such good Conclusions, yet if he should take a Survey of the Practice of a great many amongst us, he would doubtless with just regret quickly perceive it to be not more opposite to his rational Sentiments, than to the fixed and permanent Rules of their own Duty.

For alas! How obvious is it to observe the Honour and Dignity of true Religion debased and vilified by wilful and groundless Schisms? The very Ordinances and Institutions of God our Saviour, not only scandalously neglected, but even laid aside, and cryed down by some as useless and unnecessary? The Church of Christ causelessly rent and broken in Pieces; and the Members of it shamefully divided into almost as many Sects as unreasonable Opinions? And what is worse, if possible, seemingly resolved to agree in nothing more, than in keeping up and enflaming their present Divisions? I would not be thought to aggravate the Matter, (it is too bad of itself already) but rather appeal to your own Experience for the Truth of what I say; and to your Judgment, whether such a Practice is not as well destructive of Christian Unity, as disrespectful to the blessed Author of our most holy Religion; whether it does not open a Door for the most lawless Disorders and Confusions to enter in; whether it does not at once cancel and set aside all the most sacred Obligations, which Christ Jesus has laid us under to the joint Performance of God's Publick Worship; in a Word, whether it does not root out of the Minds of Men all due Notions of a Christian Church, consider'd as a Spiritual Society.

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It sometimes indeed may happen, that the National Church, where a Person lives, is over-run with a False and Idolatrous, or some other way sinful Worship; and may therefore enjoin unlawful Terms of Communion with her. And in this Case it is the Duty of every Christian, that has a due Concern for his Eternal Interest, immediately to separate himself from such a Communion: because no Church has Authority to enjoin sinful Terms of Communion; nor are those who are born or live within the Pale of it, obliged to comply with such Terms. And they who impose such unlawful Conditions of Communion, not those who separate from them, are *really* the Schismatics.

But when any particular Church is rightfully established, (as our National one most certainly is) and requires no sinful Terms of Communion, (as the Church of *England* does not) then it is the indispensable Duty of all that belong to *such* a Church, to join with her in outward Communion, in Prayers and Sacraments: to testify that they are Members of a sound Part of the Catholick Church of Christ, own him as their Head, and their Brethren as Members of the same Mystical Body. And as to the reasonableness of Church Unity, and the Abhorrence we should have of Religious Dissensions, the Great Oracle of *Geneva* himself, (*Calvin*) in his Comment on my Text, has given us *his thoughts*, in these memorable Words. *Nihil est a Christianis magis alienum, quam inter se dissidere; hoc enim est præcipuum Religionis nostræ Caput, ut Concorde inter nos simus. Hoc consensu stat & subnixæ est Salus Ecclesiæ.*

3dly. The last Instance, I shall mention, wherein all Christians are indispensably obliged to Unity, is in mutual Love and Charity. And to this the Conclusion of the Apostle's Exhortation may very probably referr, *Be ye perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.* For it is very considerable, that some of the best, and most learned Commentators, understand by the *γνώμη*, rendred Judgment by our Translators, not only the Opinion or Determination of any one; but also his Will, and the Affections of his Mind. And agreeably to their Sentiments I have thought it not improper to apply it: as conceiving it to suit very well with the Design and Meaning of the Apostle in this place; who when he had exhorted them all to speak the same Thing, in Opposition to any Heretical Tenents and Doctrines, and admonished them against Divisions; by way of Cure for the present, and Prevention of any future Schisms, and Separations, may well be presum'd to stir them up to the Practice of mutual and affectionate Love and Charity. For these Virtues are the grand Cement of the Christian Society, and firmly knit together the several Parts in one common Bond of Harmony and Peace. *These* equally conspire to adorn *that*, and render the particular Members Useful and Serviceable to *each* other, and thereby promote the Good and Benefit of the *Whole*.

Set aside these, there could be no tolerable Order and *Decorum*, no regular Peace and Quiet in any Church. And in their stead would soon grow up, a most unhappy combining into Parties, a mutual Condemnation of each other, an Interested Strife and Opposition, in one Word, the most unfociable Distractions would ensue.

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And this seems to be the very Case of the *Corinthians*; for it does not appear that in St. *Paul's* time, they had proceeded so far as actually to make a Separation, or set up Altar against Altar, and introduce different and opposite Ways of Divine Worship. But then their Spirits were enflamed to that indecent Degree, that they quickly went beyond the bounds of Reason and Religion. And as they advanced in blind and furious Zeal, so they really abated in true Charity. Hence flowed all that unchristian Animosity, and bitter Strife and Contention amongst themselves, which at first afforded the unhappy Occasion of writing this Compassionate and Pathetical Epistle. And their Case, as emphatically described in it, may be a standing Warning to Us; and as well inform Us of the dreadful Mischiefs they had brought upon themselves, thro' a bigotted Zeal without Knowledge, as instruct us in the right Way of preventing such Evils; which is by practising those most heavenly Virtues of Love and Charity. And it is to be wished, that it may have this good Effect upon Us, to teach us to lay *apart* all Envy and Malice, and unite in Charity, *The Bond of all perfectness; least if we continue to bite and devour one another, we our selves, at last, be consumed one of another.*

I pass on now to the Second general Head, which was, more particularly in Respect of the present Occasion, to represent to you the Usefulness of a Religious and Learned Education, in order to preserve and promote such truly Christian Unity. And this I shall endeavour to do, with an especial regard to the above-mentioned Instances.

1st. Then, I say, with Respect to the Fundamentals of Religion, that a Pious and Learned Instruction of young Persons is highly servicable to that good End; inasmuch as it seasons them betimes with awful and worthy Notions of God, and so prepares their Minds, for a ready Reception of any Truth which *he* delivers, and a steady Adherence unto it. We cannot be insensible that our Nature is strangely impair'd and weakned, and all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls disorder'd. And doubtless then, it becomes Us, as soon as possible, to seek out for a remedy, by which we may repair these Losses; and recover our Selves from the Inconveniencies, with which we are from our very Infancy encompassed. And there can be nothing more useful to this purpose, than a Learned and Religious Education. For *This* gradually wears off the Wildness of our Nature, supplies our Weaknesses and Defects, and furnishes the Mind with the best Materials to work upon. *This* dispells those gloomy Clouds of Ignorance and Error, wherewith we were beset, informs the Understanding, corrects the Will, and rectifies the Judgment. *This* paves the Way for a fair and impartial Enquiry into the Nature and Reasons of Things, and enables Us to take a true Estimate of them.

A Person then that has his *Parts* daily improved, and his *Capacity* enlarged, cannot readily fail, when grown to Maturity, of entertaining the most venerable Notions of God. His own right Reason doubtless will suggest to him, that *He* must be a Being of all possible Perfection. And his Religion, if fixed upon a right Bottom, will sufficiently inform him, that the most profound Reverence and Honour is due unto *him*.

him. And what greater can be shewn *him*, than to receive with a ready Cheerfulness, and embrace with a grateful Humility, all that *he*, in *his* Infinite Wisdom, shall be pleased to deliver to Us? Which Wisdom as it cannot be deceived it self; so it cannot, consistently with his other Attributes, permit him to deceive or impose upon his Creatures. And therefore, whatever Doctrines he delivers, cannot be otherwise than true.

A Soul thus season'd with the most becoming Notions of God, and fully convinced of the Narrowness of it's own Faculties, will, in all probability, be easily inclined to distrust *these*, whenever there is perceiv'd the least glimpse of a Contradiction to *those*; and rather rely upon the Infallibility of God, for it's Guide in all sacred Truth, than it's own Short-sighted, and fallible Reasoning. I would not by this be thought to go about to undervalue or decry the Use of Human Reason; which is allow'd to be necessary at all Times, provided it be contain'd within it's peculiar Province. But I only contend, that the Ground of any ones Divine Faith ought solely to be this, *viz.* That God has most undoubtedly reveal'd the Truths proposed to his Belief; and that is Reason sufficient to engage any Wise Man to believe such Truths, because God himself has deliver'd them.

And as a Religious and Learned Education of young Persons disposes them for an early and just Reception of Divine Truths, so it does likewise for a steady and zealous Adherence unto them. To be wavering and changeable in Religion, especially in the Substantials of it, either bespeaks a roving and
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unsettled Humour, or else betrays a strange Weakness of Judgment. The former of these Misfortunes will probably be prevented, and the latter corrected by such an Education as we mention. For *this* will fix them betimes, and guard against all unmanly Fluctuation and Inconstancy in Religion. *This* as it works upon the Understanding, and fills it with just Apprehensions of the reasonableness and necessity of receiving and embracing any fundamental Divine Truth, so *it* may fairly be presumed to settle their Judgments: and render them firm and resolute, as well in honestly retaining sound Doctrine, as in studiously resisting and opposing that which is otherwise.

2dly. Such an ingenuous Education tends to promote and preserve Unity, inasmuch as it renders young Persons at once firmly settled in the *Principles*, and well versed in the Practice of External Communion, with some rightfully establish'd Church of Christ. I question not but a great many of those, who actually separate from the Communion of our Church, owe their unhappy Separation only to the violent Prejudices of their Education. It is the Misfortune of a great many, that they have been brought up in a different Way from ours; and perhaps they are either not capable of judging of the Merits of the *Cause* it self, or else are byass'd in Favour of that they have been train'd up in. Had they been rightly instructed in the Nature and Obligation of the Great Duty of Church-Communion, from their Infancy, 'tis to be hoped, they would not have run into such unhappy Divisions; much less obstinately have continued in them. For such of them as are qualified by Learning and Skill to make an impartial Search, both into the holy Scripture

ture and Primitive Antiquity, will, I am persuaded, soon see their gross Mistake: and, it is Charitably to be presum'd, as soon correct it. Because *both the one, and the other* are directly opposite to the Principles and Practices of all our Separatists. And the Ingenuity of some of them, so qualified, cannot too much be commended; in that, after a fair Examination of the Matter, they have owned themselves fully satisfied, that they have been in a dangerous Error, and most joyfully embraced the Communion of the Establish'd Church.

What therefore is singly, and of it self, of such mighty Service to open the Eyes of prejudiced Persons, and disengage them from their former Schismatical Practices; cannot, sure, when join'd with the other Part, but be very expedient to settle others at first in the Principles, and regulate them in the Practice of External Communion, with a true and sound Part of Christ's Church.

It is universally agreed, that an habit of any Sort is contracted by frequent and repeated Acts; and that the longer any such has continu'd, the greater will the difficulty be of breaking it off. And accordingly it seems highly rational to assert, that the sooner the right Principles of Church Membership and Communion are instilled, the deeper Root they are likely to take in any Persons mind; and by a constant and repeated Practice, he will become accusom'd and habituated thereto; so as not easily to be shaken with any vain Wind of contrary Doctrine, or by crafty Insinuations seduced into an opposite Practice. How requisite then must such early Instructions, always join'd with
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an agreeable Practice, be, in order to keep those, who are entring upon the Stage of the World, regular in their Motions, and direct them in the paths of Peace and Unity? So just and true is the Observation of the Wise Man in this Case, that if *we train up a Child in the way, that he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it.*

3dly. Such a liberal Education betters Men's Tempers, and makes them more candid and favourable in their Judgment, both of Men and Things, and therefore manifestly tends to preserve and promote true Christian Love and Charity amongst Neighbours. And accordingly we may observe, that where-ever we meet with a Person, that has had the Opportunity and Advantage of a Pious and Learned Education, we shall generally find him of an Humble and Compassionate Temper, and willing to make all the Allowances that Religion commands or can justify him in, in Respect of all Differences, that may arise.

But on the Contrary, it is too easy to remark that Men, who have been bred up in a false and mistaken Way, and, as it too often falls out, without a tolerable Share of good Literature; are commonly hurried away with a rash and intemperate Zeal, and so prepossessed with an over-weening Opinion of themselves, that, sooner than part with one fond Notion, or give in to the Practice of others, even in indifferent Matters, they will venture to make a Sacrifice both of Peace and Charity.

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Of what dangerous Consequence the indiscreet and inconsiderate Carriage of this latter sort of Men has been, your own Observation may easily convince you, and I hope also prevail with you, against ever entering into such Measures. And if any of the former sort, notwithstanding the blessing of such an Education, as we have been all along recommending, should so far run Counter to it, as to indulge themselves in peevish Humours, or a froward Deportment; yet let it be remembred, that such a Conduct as offends against clearer Light and stronger Conviction, so it will be vastly more inexcusable, and render the Persons so offending, more odious and detestable in the Sight of God, and of all good Men. I willingly own that the best Things are liable to the greatest Abuses; nor would I be so understood, as if a Religious and Learned Education, was *absolutely effectual* to procure, and for ever settle Christian Unity in all the Instances above specified; but my meaning only is, that by the blessing of God, upon such an Education, it will prove the most likely and surest means to preserve Young Persons free from the Infection of any destructive Errors, whether in Doctrine or Worship, and promote an Universal Charity amongst all Ranks and Conditions of Men.

And now 'tis time, as I have promised, in the Third and last Place, to make a brief Application of what has been said, and therewith put an End to this Discourse. By what has been offer'd it may appear, how injudicious and ill-grounded a Calumny that is, which some have invidiously cast upon Human Learning, as if it was an Enemy to true Religion. Whereas if duely made use of, it evidently tends to it's Service and Honour. For it clears the Mind from corrupt and barbarous Notions, exempts it from the slavish Ties of prejudice and partiality, and fills it with the clearest Apprehensions of the most important Matters. Nor does it barely rest it self in Contemplation, but naturally leads the Way to worthy and discreet Actions. For when the Mind is once re-

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plenish'd with sound and good Principles, not taken up at a Venture, but upon the most mature Deliberation, what can we reasonably expect, but that it should exert it self in a suitable Manner upon all proper Occasions.

And yet alas! we sometimes find Men that pretend to have made no inconsiderable progress in Human Learning, setting up this in Opposition to Revelation, or using it as far as in them lies against it's Interest. But why should not the Fault be laid upon those who abuse it, and not transferred to the Thing it self? Is it reasonable to think that the scandalous Abuse of any thing is a good Argument, why the thing it self should be laid aside? The Scriptures themselves are liable to be wrested to Men's Destruction; it will not therefore surely follow that Men should be debarr'd the Use of them. Even so, tho' Human Learning be sometimes press'd against the Service of Revelation, it ought not therefore to be wholly discarded. It is a just Observation of the Learned Lord B A C O N, *that a little Philosophy inclines Man's Mind to Atheism, but depth in Philosophy brings Men's Minds about to Religion.* And it is full as true, that a little smattering in Human Learning may prompt Men to oppose Revealed Religion, but the greater Progress any make therein, the readier they will be to acknowledge it's Insufficiency, and adore that Revelation they perhaps once Insulted. And indeed it would puzzle the most judicious Person to determine, whether the Folly or the Impudence of such Pretenders to Polite Learning, be really the greater or deserves more to be condemned. But I forbear to say any thing farther upon this Subject, since the former Charge has been so fully made good against the Modish Free-Thinkers, and the latter so severely, but justly expos'd both from the Pulpit and the Press.

You have had set forth to you what an happy Influence a Pious and Ingenuous Education will probably carry along with it, not only as a Preservative against the Infection of deadly Errors, but also as an Assistant to the Propagation of sound Chri-

Christian Doctrine. May this then be a constant Admonition to all, who have had the Benefit of such Education, to make a right Use of it, for their own Sake, for the good of their Neighbours, and for the Honour of God. And to this purpose let them remember, that if they would avoid being tainted with Heretical Pravity, they must be sure to banish from their Hearts, all Pride and turbulent Passion. *That* introduces singularity, and an awkward Fondness for Novelty. *This* supplies with a warm Imagination and ill-grounded Conjectures, the Defect of substantial Proofs: But both together very rarely fail of producing Consequences, equally hateful to God, and destructive of Religion; most certainly injurious to others, but more, infinitely more fatal to themselves. And in their stead permit me to recommend to your Approbation and Choice, a profound Humility of Mind, and such a Meekness and Poverty of Spirit, as our Dear Redeemer was pleased to enjoin. These, if rightly ingrafted and duely cultivated, will soon bring forth the blessed Fruits of Unity and Peace. These, if conscientiously practis'd, will soon put a stop to the impetuous Torrent of pernicious Doctrines, which have overflow'd the Church to the utter Destruction of many Souls; for these will effectually teach All, both Learned and Unlearned, to submit their own Reasonings to the Incomprehensible Wisdom of the most High God, and to be ready at all times to believe, what he has revealed to Mankind, without any Manner of Distrust or Diffidence.

From the Consideration of the Usefulness of early and good Instructions, towards a right Performance of our Duty, in respect of that Venerable Society the Christian Church, of a sound Part of which we all, I hope, have the Happiness to be Members, give me leave if not to exhort and excite you to a regular and uniform Compliance with the Establish'd Church in all the several parts of Divine Worship; yet at least to admonish you to continue firm and unshaken in such a

plenish'd with sound and good Principles, not taken up at a Venture, but upon the most mature Deliberation, what can we reasonably expect, but that it should exert it self in a suitable Manner upon all proper Occasions.

And yet alas! we sometimes find Men that pretend to have made no inconsiderable progress in Human Learning, setting up this in Opposition to Revelation, or using it as far as in them lies against it's Interest. But why should not the Fault be laid upon those who abuse it, and not transferred to the Thing it self? Is it reasonable to think that the scandalous Abuse of any thing is a good Argument, why the thing it self should be laid aside? The Scriptures themselves are liable to be wrested to Men's Destruction; it will not therefore surely follow that Men should be debarr'd the Use of them. Even so, tho' Human Learning be sometimes press'd against the Service of Revelation, it ought not therefore to be wholly discarded. It is a just Observation of the Learned Lord B A C O N, *that a little Philosophy inclines Man's Mind to Atheism, but depth in Philosophy brings Men's Minds about to Religion.* And it is full as true, that a little smattering in Human Learning may prompt Men to oppose Revealed Religion, but the greater Progress any make therein, the readier they will be to acknowledge it's Insufficiency, and adore that Revelation they perhaps once Insulted. And indeed it would puzzle the most judicious Person to determine, whether the Folly or the Impudence of such Pretenders to Polite Learning, be really the greater or deserves more to be condemned. But I forbear to say any thing farther upon this Subject, since the former Charge has been so fully made good against the Modish Free-Thinkers, and the latter so severely, but justly expos'd both from the Pulpit and the Press.

You have had set forth to you what an happy Influence a Pious and Ingenuous Education will probably carry along with it, not only as a Preservative against the Infection of deadly Errors, but also as an Assistant to the Propagation of sound Chri-

Christian Doctrine. May this then be a constant Admonition to all, who have had the Benefit of such Education, to make a right Use of it, for their own Sake, for the good of their Neighbours, and for the Honour of God. And to this purpose let them remember, that if they would avoid being tainted with Heretical Pravity, they must be sure to banish from their Hearts, all Pride and turbulent Passion. *That* introduces singularity, and an awkward Fondness for Novelty. *This* supplies with a warm Imagination and ill-grounded Conjectures, the Defect of substantial Proofs: But both together very rarely fail of producing Consequences, equally hateful to God, and destructive of Religion; most certainly injurious to others, but more, infinitely more fatal to themselves. And in their stead permit me to recommend to your Approbation and Choice, a profound Humility of Mind, and such a Meekness and Poverty of Spirit, as our Dear Redeemer was pleased to enjoin. These, if rightly ingrafted and duely cultivated, will soon bring forth the blessed Fruits of Unity and Peace. These, if conscientiously practis'd, will soon put a stop to the impetuous Torrent of pernicious Doctrines, which have overflow'd the Church to the utter Destruction of many Souls; for these will effectually teach All, both Learned and Unlearned, to submit their own Reasonings to the Incomprehensible Wisdom of the most High God, and to be ready at all times to believe, what he has revealed to Mankind, without any Manner of Distrust or Diffidence.

From the Consideration of the Usefulness of early and good Instructions, towards a right Performance of our Duty, in respect of that Venerable Society the Christian Church, of a sound Part of which we all, I hope, have the Happiness to be Members, give me leave if not to exhort and excite you to a regular and uniform Compliance with the Establish'd Church in all the several parts of Divine Worship; yet at least to admonish you to continue firm and unshaken in such a

laudable Practice. This will best demonstrate your hearty and zealous Concern for the Welfare and Prosperity of our truly Orthodox and Apostolical Church; and 'tis to be hoped, render it in the sight of some, at present, misguided Persons, what it is already, in the Eyes of all unprejudiced Ones, The Praise and the Joy of the Earth.

You have heard how serviceable a Prudent Education is, towards the taking off the Roughness of our Tempers, and introducing a peaceful, a mild, and charitable Behaviour amongst Men. Let this then engage Us, not willingly to frustrate so good an End, but take care by our own Conduct, to recommend those most admirable Virtues of Love and Charity unto all about Us.

To draw to a Conclusion: Since the business of a Virtuous and Ingenuous Instruction of Young Persons, is of so beneficial a Nature, and highly Useful and Advantageous upon so *many* Accounts, may there never be wanting all due Encouragement and Assistance, for the promoting and advancing of it. And that this good Work, wheresoever begun or carried on, may Universally prosper and flourish, to the Honour of God, the Peace of his Church, and the Happiness of Mankind, let Us all earnestly beg of God, the Author and the Giver of all good Things, that he would be graciously pleased to vouchsafe his Blessing upon it: To which humble and affectionate Petition, let every devout Person, every true Member of the Church, and all that wish well to the Prosperity of our *Jerusalem*, say, *Amen* and *Amen*.

Now unto the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, by all Creatures, both in Heaven and Earth, all Power, Adoration and Praise, both now and for evermore.

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